

UNITED STATES PATENT APPLICATION

FOR

**GAMING DEVICE HAVING A DESTINATION PURSUIT BONUS SCHEME
WITH ADVANCE AND SETBACK CONDITIONS**

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GAMING DEVICE HAVING A DESTINATION PURSUIT BONUS SCHEME WITH ADVANCE AND SETBACK CONDITIONS

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PRIORITY CLAIM

10 This application is a continuation-in-part of and claims the benefit of U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 10/393,201, filed March 20, 2003, which is a continuation of and claims the benefit of U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 10/288,750, filed November 6, 2002, which is a continuation of and claims the benefit of U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 09/686,409, filed October 11, 2000, now U.S. Patent 6,494,785 B1.

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CROSS REFERENCES TO RELATED APPLICATION

20 This application is related to the following commonly-owned co-pending patent applications: GAMING DEVICE WITH BONUS SCHEME PROVIDING AWARDS ASSOCIATED WITH MOVEMENTS ALONG A PATH," Serial No. 09/583,429, Attorney Docket No. 0112300-016; and "GAMING DEVICE WITH A BONUS SCHEME INVOLVING MOVEMENT ALONG PATHS WITH PATH CHANGE CONDITIONS," Serial No. 09/686,538, Attorney Docket No. 0112300-149.

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DESCRIPTION

The present invention relates in general to a gaming device, and more particularly in one embodiment to a gaming device which has a bonus scheme which involves moving a symbol toward a destination with the possibility of advance and setback conditions occurring, and in an alternative embodiment, moving a symbol away from a destination with the possibility of advance and setback conditions.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Many existing gaming machines, such as traditional slot machines, include bonus rounds. Typically, a bonus round begins when the player reaches a bonus triggering event in the primary game of the gaming device. In slot machines with reels, the triggering event usually occurs when the player reaches a predetermined combination of symbols on the reels. Usually the bonus scheme provides the player with an opportunity to gain bonus value before the bonus round terminates.

Certain bonus schemes involve advancing a symbol from one location to another toward a destination. A player may receive bonus values when landing on various locations, and the player may also receive a relatively high bonus value when the player's symbol reaches the destination. Though these types of bonus schemes may exist, these bonus schemes do not include conditions which automatically move the symbol one or more locations backward.

To increase player enjoyment and excitement, it is desirable to provide players with new bonus schemes for gaming devices which automatically move a player's symbol backward upon the occurrence of predetermined events while the player is attempting to reach a destination or in the alternative to automatically move a player's symbol backward and forward upon the occurrence of predetermined events while the player is attempting to avoid reaching a destination.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention overcomes the above shortcomings by providing a gaming device and method which has a bonus scheme which includes a plurality of locations, including at least one destination location. The gaming device also includes at least one symbol located at one of these locations. The term location, as used herein, includes any area, position or objective displayed or designated by the gaming device. A destination location is the location pursued by the player and preferably, when the player reaches the destination location, the gaming device awards the player with a relatively high bonus value or the opportunity to gain a relatively high bonus value. The term symbol, as used herein, includes any visual, or audiovisual representation or image of a person, place or thing, in motion or at rest. Preferably, the plurality of locations form a path, and the path can be shaped in any orderly or disorderly form or fashion. Furthermore, it is preferable that a bonus value is associated with each location.

In operation, the symbol begins at a predetermined location. The gaming device then moves the symbol in the direction of the destination location, preferably by enabling the player to push a play button. Depending upon the new location of the symbol, a setback condition may occur or an advance condition may occur. If a setback condition occurs, the gaming device automatically moves the symbol to a predetermined location or a predetermined number of locations away from its current location, in the opposite direction of the destination location. If an advance condition occurs, the gaming device automatically moves the symbol to a predetermined location or a predetermined number of locations from its current location in the direction of the destination location. At any time, the player can stop the bonus round and accept the bonus value associated with the present location. Alternatively, the player can move the symbol forward, preferably by pushing a play button again. With this type of bonus scheme, the gaming device preferably provides the player with a limited number of moves to reach the destination location. In pursuit of this objective, the player faces: (i) a plurality

of possible setback conditions; (ii) a plurality of possible advance conditions; and (iii) the option of accepting a bonus value and ending the bonus round or continuing the bonus round and possibly receiving a lower bonus value. The setback conditions hinder the player's advancement, and the advance
5 conditions aid the player in reaching the destination location.

Preferably, this bonus scheme also includes one or more bonus values and one or more terminating conditions associated with predetermined locations. These terminating conditions are predetermined by the gaming device and occur when one or more events occur during the bonus round.
10 Preferably, when the symbol lands on predetermined locations, the gaming device awards the player with bonus values associated therewith. Furthermore, it is preferable that if the player reaches the destination location, the gaming device awards the player with an opportunity to gain a relatively high bonus value. In addition, it is preferable that when the symbol lands on
15 predetermined locations, the gaming device awards the player with bonus values associated therewith and then terminates the bonus round.

In one preferred embodiment, the plurality of locations are formed in a grid-shaped path. Various bonus values are associated with each location. The symbol begins at the bottom left-hand corner of the grid and advances
20 along the rows from the bottom row to the top row. The destination location is located in the top left-hand corner of the grid. This preferred embodiment also includes a setback condition associated with at least one location. When the player reaches such a location, a setback condition occurs and the gaming device automatically relocates the symbol accordingly. In addition, the
25 setback condition may operate as a terminating condition, causing the gaming device to award the player with a bonus value associated with the new location and then terminate the bonus round. When the symbol lands on a predetermined location, an advance condition occurs and the gaming device automatically relocates the symbol accordingly. In addition, if neither a
30 terminating condition nor an advance condition occurs, the gaming device enables the player to terminate the bonus round and accept the bonus value

associated with the present location, or to continue moving toward the destination location.

If the player moves the symbol to the destination location or beyond the destination location, the gaming device provides the player with an opportunity to gain a relatively high bonus value. The gaming device displays the possible bonus values which the player can gain. Preferably, the gaming device enables the player to push a play button, and the gaming device awards the player with one of these bonus values, and finally the bonus round terminates.

The present invention provides a gaming device with a bonus scheme which enables the player to move a symbol toward a destination location and provides the player with a relatively high bonus value if the player reaches the destination location. As the player pursues this destination, the player faces: (i) the decision of ending the bonus round with a particular bonus value or continuing and running the risk of receiving a lower bonus value; (ii) setback conditions which hinder the player's progress in reaching the destination location; and (iii) advance conditions which aid the player in reaching the destination location.

In an alternative embodiment, rather than associating a plurality of locations with awards, setback conditions and advance conditions, the gaming device determines as the game is played whether to select an advance condition (i.e., advance the player symbol toward the destination location) or whether to select a setback condition (i.e., move the player symbol away from the destination location) and how many locations to move the player symbol.

In one embodiment, each advance condition and each setback condition is associated with a number of location moves and a probability of being selected by the gaming device. For example, an advance condition of ten locations will have a different chance of being selected by the gaming device than a setback condition of four locations or an advance condition of six locations. In another embodiment, each advance condition and each setback condition is not associated with a number of location moves. In this

embodiment, as described above, the gaming device selects, based on associated probabilities, whether the player symbol's next move will be an advance condition or a setback condition and then the gaming device determines the number or amount of location moves the player symbol will be moved. In this embodiment, each number of location moves is preferably associated with a probability of being selected. That is, whenever the player symbol is moved to one of the plurality of locations, the gaming device determines, based on the associated probabilities, whether to advance the player symbol toward the destination location or whether to move the player symbol away from the destination location and how many locations to move the player symbol.

In an alternative embodiment, in addition to determining the player symbol's next move, the gaming device also determines whether to provide the player an award and if so, how much of an award to provide the player. In this embodiment, each award is preferably associated with a probability of being selected and the gaming device selects each award based on the associated probabilities.

In one alternative embodiment of the present invention, the player is not provided an award for the symbol reaching or moving beyond or past the destination location, but rather, the player is provided an award based on how many locations the symbol is moved to before the symbol reaches or is moved beyond a predetermined location, such as the destination location. In one embodiment, the player's objective is for the symbol to avoid reaching the destination location because once the symbol reaches or is moved beyond the destination location, the game ends. That is, if the symbol is moved or relocated (upon the occurrence of an advance condition) to or beyond the destination location, then the symbol movement stops, the player is provided no more awards and the game ends. In this embodiment, the player is provided any award associated with the player symbol's current location and as long as the symbol continues moving from location to location, the player will continue accumulating the awards associated with a plurality of the

locations. In another embodiment, the award provided to the player is based solely on the number of locations the player symbol moves to before the player symbol reaches the destination location or beyond. In this embodiment, the more locations the player's symbol moves to before
5 reaching the destination location, the greater the award that will be provided to the player.

In an alternative embodiment, the less locations the player's symbol moves to before reaching the destination location, the greater the award that will be provided to the player. In this embodiment, the player's objective is to
10 reach the destination location with as little moves as possible because the less moves it takes to reach the destination location, the greater the award.

In another embodiment, the award provided to the player is based on a combination of the number of locations the player symbol moves to before the player symbol reaches the destination location and the awards associated
15 with any of the locations the player symbol is moved to.

Unlike the embodiments described above wherein the setback conditions hinder the progress of the player's symbol toward the destination and the advance conditions aid the progress of the player's symbol toward the destination, in this embodiment, the setback conditions aid the player and the
20 advance conditions hinder the progress of the player's symbol toward the destination. That is, since the player's objective in this embodiment is to avoid reaching the destination location, any condition that moves the symbol closer to the destination location and thus closer to the end of the game is detrimental to the player's continuation of the game. On the other hand, if the
25 symbol is close to the destination location, then a setback condition aids the player because without relocating the symbol away from the destination location, the symbol may be moved to or beyond the destination location and thus ending the game.

In an alternative embodiment of the present invention, the player is not
30 provided an award for the symbol reaching or moving beyond the destination location, but rather, the player is provided an award based on how many

locations between two predetermined locations, such as the start location and the destination location, that the symbol is moved to before the symbol reaches or is moved beyond one of the two predetermined locations. In this embodiment, unlike the embodiments described above, if the symbol is
5 relocated or moved back to or back beyond the start location (i.e., by a setback condition), the game ends. In one embodiment, the player is provided an award, if any, for each of the locations the player symbol is moved to. In another embodiment, the award provided to the player is based on the number of locations the player symbol moves to before the player
10 symbol is moved to a location that is not between the two predetermined locations.

In an alternative embodiment, the less locations the player's symbol moves to before reaching a location that is not between the two predetermined locations, the greater the award that will be provided to the
15 player. In another embodiment, the award provided to the player is based on a combination of the number of locations the player symbol moves to before the player symbol is moved to a location that is not between the two predetermined locations and any award provided for any of the locations the player symbol is moved to.

20 It should also be appreciated that in this embodiment, depending on the current location of the symbol, both the setback conditions and the advance conditions can each hinder or aid the player. For example, if the symbol is close to the start location, then a setback condition hinders the player because the setback condition may relocate the symbol back to or
25 beyond the start location thus ending the game. On the other hand, if the symbol is close to the destination location, then a setback condition aids the player because without relocating the symbol further away from the destination location, the symbol may be moved to or beyond the destination location, thus ending the game.

30 It is therefore an object of the present invention to provide a gaming device with a bonus scheme which includes advance and setback conditions.

Other objects, features and advantages of the invention will be apparent from the following detailed disclosure, taken in conjunction with the accompanying sheets of drawings, wherein like numerals refer to like parts, elements, components, steps and processes.

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BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Fig. 1A is a perspective view of one embodiment of the gaming device of the present invention;

10 Fig. 1B is a perspective view of another embodiment of the gaming device of the present invention;

Fig. 2 is a schematic block diagram of the electronic configuration of one embodiment of the gaming device of the present invention;

15 Figs. 3A, 3B, 3C, 3D and 3E are elevation views of a path and a symbol showing the initial position of the symbol and four moves made by the symbol in one embodiment of present invention;

Figs. 4A, 4B, 4C, 4D and 4E are elevation views of a path and a symbol showing the initial position of the symbol and four moves made by the symbol in another embodiment of the present invention;

20 Fig. 5 is a flow diagram of one embodiment of the present invention;

Fig. 6 is an elevation view of a grid-shaped path, including the locations and symbol in one embodiment of the present invention; and

Fig. 7 is a bar graph of the locations, destination location and symbol movement in one embodiment of the present invention;

25 Figs. 8A, 8B, 8C, 8D, 8E, 8F and 8G are elevation views of one alternative embodiment of the present invention wherein the player's objective is to avoid reaching the destination location.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

Gaming Device and Electronics

Referring now to the drawings, two embodiments of the gaming device
5 of the present invention are illustrated in Figs. 1A and 1B as gaming device
10a and gaming device 10b, respectively. Gaming device 10a and/or gaming
device 10b are generally referred to herein as gaming device 10. Gaming
device 10 is preferably a slot machine having the controls, displays and
features of a conventional slot machine. It is constructed so that a player can
10 operate it while standing or sitting, and gaming device 10 is preferably
mounted on a console. However, it should be appreciated that gaming device
10 can be constructed as a pub-style table-top game (not shown) which a
player can operate preferably while sitting. Furthermore, gaming device 10
can be constructed with varying cabinet and display designs, as illustrated by
15 the designs shown in Figs. 1A and 1B. Gaming device 10 can also be
implemented as a program code stored in a detachable cartridge for operating
a hand-held video game device. Also, gaming device 10 can be implemented
as a program code stored on a disk or other memory device which a player
can use in a desktop or laptop personal computer or other computerized
20 platform.

Gaming device 10 can incorporate any primary game such as slot,
poker or keno, any of their bonus triggering events and any of their bonus
round games. The symbols and indicia used on and in gaming device 10 may
be in mechanical, electrical or video form.

25 As illustrated in Figs. 1A and 1B, gaming device 10 includes a coin slot
12 and bill acceptor 14 where the player inserts money, coins or tokens. The
player can place coins in the coin slot 12 or paper money or ticket vouchers in
the bill acceptor 14. Other devices could be used for accepting payment such
as readers or validators for credit cards or debit cards. When a player inserts
30 money in gaming device 10, a number of credits corresponding to the amount
deposited is shown in a credit display 16. After depositing the appropriate

amount of money, a player can begin the game by pulling arm 18 or pushing play button 20. Play button 20 can be any play activator used by the player which starts any game or sequence of events in the gaming device.

As shown in Figs. 1A and 1B, gaming device 10 also includes a bet display 22 and a bet one button 24. The player places a bet by pushing the bet one button 24. The player can increase the bet by one credit each time the player pushes the bet one button 24. When the player pushes the bet one button 24, the number of credits shown in the credit display 16 decreases by one, and the number of credits shown in the bet display 22 increases by one.

At any time during the game, a player may "cash out" and thereby receive a number of coins corresponding to the number of remaining credits by pushing a cash out button 26. When the player "cashes out," the player receives the coins in a coin payout tray 28. The gaming device 10 may employ other payout mechanisms such as credit slips redeemable by a cashier or electronically recordable cards which keep track of the player's credits.

Gaming device 10 also includes one or more display devices. The embodiment shown in Fig. 1A includes a central display device 30, and the alternative embodiment shown in Fig. 1B includes a central display device 30 as well as an upper display device 32. Gaming device 10 preferably displays a plurality of reels 34, preferably three to five reels 34 in mechanical or video form at one or more of the display devices. However, it should be appreciated that the display devices can display any visual representation or exhibition, including but not limited to movement of physical objects such as mechanical reels and wheels, dynamic lighting and video images. A display device can be any viewing surface such as glass, a video monitor or screen, a liquid crystal display or any other display mechanism. If the reels 34 are in video form, the display device for the video reels 34 is preferably a video monitor.

Each reel 34 displays a plurality of indicia such as bells, hearts, fruits, numbers, letters, bars or other images which preferably correspond to a

theme associated with the gaming device 10. Furthermore, gaming device 10 preferably includes speakers 36 for making sounds or playing music.

As illustrated in Fig. 2, the general electronic configuration of gaming device 10 preferably includes: a processor 38; a memory device 40 for storing program code or other data; a central display device 30; an upper display device 32; a sound card 42; a plurality of speakers 36; and one or more input devices 44. The processor 38 is preferably a microprocessor or microcontroller-based platform which is capable of displaying images, symbols and other indicia such as images of people, characters, places, things and faces of cards. The memory device 40 can include random access memory (RAM) 46 for storing event data or other data generated or used during a particular game. The memory device 40 can also include read only memory (ROM) 48 for storing program code which controls the gaming device 10 so that it plays a particular game in accordance with applicable game rules and pay tables.

As illustrated in Fig. 2, the player preferably uses the input devices 44, such as pull arm 18, play button 20, the bet one button 24 and the cash out button 26 to input signals into gaming device 10. In certain instances it is preferable to use a touch screen 50 and an associated touch screen controller 52 instead of a conventional video monitor display device. Touch screen 50 and touch screen controller 52 are connected to a video controller 54 and processor 38. A player can make decisions and input signals into the gaming device 10 by touching touch screen 50 at the appropriate places. As further illustrated in Fig. 2, the processor 38 can be connected to coin slot 12 or bill acceptor 14. The processor 38 can be programmed to require a player to deposit a certain amount of money in order to start the game.

It should be appreciated that although a processor 38 and memory device 40 are preferable implementations of the present invention, the present invention can also be implemented using one or more application-specific integrated circuits (ASIC's) or other hard-wired devices, or using mechanical devices (collectively referred to herein as a "processor"). Furthermore,

although the processor 38 and memory device 40 preferably reside on each gaming device 10 unit, it is possible to provide some or all of their functions at a central location such as a network server for communication to a playing station such as over a local area network (LAN), wide area network (WAN),
5 Internet connection, microwave link, and the like. The processor 38 and memory device 40 is generally referred to herein as the "computer" or "controller."

With reference to Figs. 1A, 1B and 2, to operate the gaming device 10 in one embodiment the player must insert the appropriate amount of money or
10 tokens at coin slot 12 or bill acceptor 14 and then pull the arm 18 or push the play button 20. The reels 34 will then begin to spin. Eventually, the reels 34 will come to a stop. As long as the player has credits remaining, the player can spin the reels 34 again. Depending upon where the reels 34 stop, the player may or may not win additional credits.

15 In addition to winning credits in this manner, preferably gaming device 10 also gives players the opportunity to win credits in a bonus round. This type of gaming device 10 will include a program which will automatically begin a bonus round when the player has achieved a qualifying condition in the game. This qualifying condition can be a particular arrangement of indicia on
20 a display device. The gaming device 10 preferably uses a video-based central display device 30 to enable the player to play the bonus round. Preferably, the qualifying condition is a predetermined combination of indicia appearing on a plurality of reels 34. As illustrated in the five reel slot game shown in Figs. 1A and 1B, the qualifying condition could be the number seven
25 appearing on three adjacent reels 34 along a payline 56. It should be appreciated that the present invention can include one or more paylines, such as payline 56, wherein the paylines can be horizontal, diagonal or any combination thereof.

Bonus Scheme

30 If a player achieves a bonus triggering or qualifying condition while playing the game, the gaming device 10 automatically initiates the bonus

round of the present invention. The bonus scheme of the present invention includes a plurality of locations 100, one or more destination locations 102 and at least one symbol 104. The locations 100 can be arranged in any orderly or disorderly fashion or pattern. Preferably, locations 100 are
5 arranged in the shape of a non-cyclical path 106.

As shown in Fig. 3, a path 106 can consist of a plurality of locations 100 adjoining one another. As shown in Fig. 4, a path 106 can be in the shape of a line. Furthermore, as shown in Fig. 6, a path 106 can be in the shape of a grid, including a plurality of locations 100. It should be appreciated
10 that the path shapes shown in Figs. 3, 4 and 6 are merely illustrative paths 106 and that the present invention can include other types and shapes of paths 106.

With reference to Fig. 5, in operation after the bonus round begins, the gaming device displays the locations 100 (which form the path 106) and the
15 symbol 104, as indicated by blocks 108 and 110. The starting location of symbol 104 and the destination location 102 can be located anywhere on the path 106 and are preferably predetermined by the gaming device. The examples shown in Figs. 3, 4 and 6 indicate particular start locations 100 and destination locations 102 merely for illustrative purposes. After displaying the
20 locations 100 and symbol 104, the gaming device then moves the symbol 104 to a different location 100 in the direction of the destination location 102, as indicated by block 112.

The gaming device can cause this move automatically based upon a predetermined computer program. However, it is preferable that the gaming
25 device causes this move by enabling the player to push the play button 20. After the player pushes the play button 20, the gaming device preferably determines the new location 100 by random generation calculations or other calculations involving predetermined probabilities and/or outcomes. The example shown in Fig. 3 shows a path 106 at different times as the symbol
30 104 moves four times during a bonus round. Fig. 3A shows the starting location of symbol 104. Fig. 3B shows the initial move of symbol 104 after the

player pushed the play button 20 for the first time. Similarly, Fig. 4A shows the starting location of symbol 104 in a different path 106, and Fig. 4B shows the first move of this symbol 104.

Referring again to Fig. 5, after the symbol 104 is moved, either an
5 advanced condition occurs or a setback condition occurs, as indicated by block 114. If an advance condition occurs, the gaming device will automatically move symbol 104 toward the destination location 102 to a predetermined location 100. The move caused by an advance condition is illustrated in Figs. 3C and 4C.

10 If instead of reaching an advance condition, the player reaches a setback condition, the gaming device will automatically move symbol 104 away from the destination location 102. Specifically where the gaming device moves symbol 104 after an advance or setback condition occurs is preferably predetermined by the gaming device. However, the present invention can be
15 adapted so that such a move is determined randomly after a player pushes the play button 20. As indicated by diamond 116 and block 118 in Fig. 5, if the symbol 104 does not reach or move beyond the destination location 102 after an advance condition occurs, or if a setback condition occurs preventing the symbol 104 from reaching or moving beyond the destination location 102, the
20 gaming device preferably enables the player to make a decision: to accept a particular bonus value associated with the present location and end the bonus round, or to continue the bonus round with the possibility of receiving a higher or lower bonus value.

Accepting a bonus value functions as a terminating condition. It is also
25 preferable that one or more of the setback conditions function as a terminating condition. However, any event or sequence of events can result in a terminating condition as is predetermined by the gaming device. Preferably, the gaming device provides the player with a limited number of moves or opportunities to move symbol 104 to the destination location 102. When this
30 number is exhausted, a terminating condition occurs and the bonus round terminates. If a terminating condition occurs, the gaming device terminates

the bonus round, as indicated by diamond 120 and block 124. In an alternative embodiment, a setback condition does not operate as a terminating condition and, as indicated by diamond 120 and block 112, after a setback condition occurs the gaming device will enable the player to push the play button 20 again in order to move symbol 104 toward the destination location 102. This process continues until the player reaches a terminating condition or the destination location 102.

In the example shown in Fig. 3C, after pushing play button 20 for a second time, the player came within one location from reaching the destination location 102. However, this particular location 100 was associated with a setback condition which caused the symbol 104 to move backward three locations as shown in Fig. 3D. Then the player pushed the play button 20 again and finally reached the destination location 102, as shown in Fig. 3E. Likewise with reference to Fig. 4, the player experienced a setback condition as shown in Fig. 4D, and then the player recovered and reached the destination location 102 as shown in Fig. 4E. Preferably a player can reach a destination location 102 by positioning symbol 104 on the destination location 102 or by receiving a move which would locate symbol 104 beyond the destination location 102. Though in these examples the player reached the destination location 102, it should be understood that this will not always be the case, and will preferably be based on the winning percentages desired by the implementation of the gaming device and on the random determination made by the gaming machines.

Referring back to Fig. 5, after the player reaches the destination location 102, the gaming device can automatically award the player with a bonus value associated with the destination location 102. However, it is preferable that the gaming device provides the player with an opportunity to gain a bonus value associated with reaching the destination location 102, as indicated by block 122. Here, the gaming device displays a set of bonus values to the player, the player pushes the play button 20 and the gaming device awards the player with one of the values in the set. These bonus

values are preferably relatively high in comparison to any bonus values associated with any of the locations 100. As indicated by block 124 in Fig. 5, after the player reaches a terminating condition or reaches the destination location 102, the bonus round terminates and the gaming device provides the player with any payout due to the player.

In one preferred embodiment shown in Fig. 6, the player moves the symbol 104 in an S-shaped pattern from the bottom of a grid toward the top of a grid. Preferably, as indicated in Fig. 6, the starting location 100 is positioned at the bottom left-hand corner of the path 106, and the destination location 102 is positioned at the top left-hand corner of the path 106. Each of the locations 100 are associated with various bonus values (not shown). When the symbol 104 moves to a location 100, the gaming device enables the player to accept the associated bonus value and terminate the bonus round or to continue the bonus round. If the player continues, the player risks ending the bonus round with a bonus value lower than what the player could have received.

In addition, one or more of the locations 100 are associated with setback conditions, and one or more of these setback conditions may also operate as terminating conditions as discussed above. Furthermore, one or more of the locations 100 are associated with advance conditions which automatically move the symbol 104 toward the destination location a predetermined number of locations 100, as discussed above. If the symbol 104 reaches or would move beyond the destination location 102 the gaming device provides the player with an opportunity to gain a relatively high bonus value 126, shown in Fig. 6. Here, the gaming device displays a set of bonus values 126 and enables the player to push the play button. After pushing the play button, the gaming device provides the player with one of these bonus values 126.

In an alternative embodiment illustrated in Fig. 7, moving to a location 100 can be the equivalent of achieving an objective, and the ultimate objective can be the destination location 102. The player begins at one of a plurality of

starting locations 100, and the gaming device provides the player with a predetermined number of attempts to reach the destination location 102. In Fig. 7, the attempts are indicated by the notation A1, A2, A3, A4, A5 and A6. With attempts A1 and A2, the player moved to locations 100 associated with certain advanced conditions. The advance is indicated by elongation of the bars in Fig. 7. However, upon attempt A3, the player reached a setback condition, but thereafter, the player reached additional advance conditions. Ultimately, upon the sixth attempt, the player reached the destination location 102.

It should be appreciated that the destination location can be an objective in a point-based game. Accordingly, when the player reaches a setback condition, the gaming device can deduct points from the player, and when the player reaches advance conditions the gaming device can provide the player with points. This type of alternative embodiment is applicable to games such as boxing, golf, track and field games, and the like. It should also be appreciated that the locations can be accomplishments or goals included in games which incorporate concepts such as climbing and falling; raising and lowering; and building structures or items which deteriorate or fall apart and must be rebuilt.

In an alternative embodiment, rather than associating a plurality of locations with awards, setback conditions and advance conditions, for each location the player symbol moves to as the game is played, the gaming device determines whether to advance the player symbol toward the destination location or whether to move the player symbol away from the destination location. In one embodiment, each advance condition is associated with a number of moves toward the destination location and a probability of being selected by the gaming device. Moreover, each setback condition is associated with a number of moves away from the destination location and a probability of being selected by the gaming device. For example, an advance condition that moves the player symbol five locations toward the destination location may be associated with a 15% chance of being selected, while a

setback condition that moves the player symbol three locations away from the destination location may be associated with a 5% chance of being selected.

5 In this embodiment, the gaming device selects, based on the associated probabilities, one of the advance conditions or one of the setback conditions and moves the player symbol the number or amount of moves associated with the selected condition. In one embodiment, the probabilities associated with each condition change is dependent on the number of moves the player symbol has made during a particular game sequence. For example, the more moves the player symbol has made, the greater the probability that the gaming device selects an advance condition associated with a high number of moves toward the destination location.

15 In another embodiment, each advance condition and each setback condition is not associated with a number of moves, but rather, the gaming device determines how many locations to move the player symbol as the game is played. In this embodiment, each advance condition and each setback are preferably associated with a probability of being selected by the gaming device as described above and each number of location moves (i.e., move 2, 3 or 4 locations) is also preferably associated with a probability of being selected. That is, whenever the player symbol is moved to one of the plurality of locations, the gaming device determines, based on the associated probabilities, whether to advance the player symbol toward the destination location or to move the player symbol away from the destination location and how many locations to move the player symbol.

25 In another embodiment, in addition to selecting, based on probabilities, whether the player obtains an advance condition or a setback condition, the gaming device also determines whether to provide the player an award and how much of an award to provide the player. In this embodiment, each award is associated with a probability of being selected by the gaming device. In this embodiment, it is preferable that the greater the value of the award, the lower the probability associated with that award. For example, an award of ten credits may be associated with a 10% chance of being selected by the

gaming device while an award of five-hundred credits may be associated with a 1% chance of being selected by the gaming device.

Referring now to Figs. 8A to 8G, in one embodiment of the present invention, the player is not provided an award for the symbol reaching or moving beyond the destination location, but rather, the player is provided an award based on how many locations the symbol is moved to before the symbol reaches or is moved beyond or past a predetermined location, such as the destination location. In one embodiment, the player's objective is for the symbol to avoid reaching the destination location because once the symbol reaches or is moved beyond the destination location, the game ends and the player is provided no more awards. In other words, as long as the symbol continues moving from location to location, the player will continue accumulating the awards associated with a plurality of the locations.

As illustrated in Fig. 8A, in this embodiment, the gaming device provides a screen or display 200 which enables a player to obtain one or more awards. The gaming device provides a plurality of locations 202, 204, 206, 208, 210, 212, 214, 216, 218, 220, 222, 224, 226, 228, 230, 232, 234, 236, 238, 240, 242, 244, 246, 248, 250, 252, 254, 256, 258, 260, 262 and 264 including a start location 202 and a destination location 264. As described above, in one embodiment a plurality of the locations are associated with awards, at least one and preferably a plurality of the locations are associated with setback conditions and at least one and preferably a plurality of locations are associated with advance conditions. In this embodiment, the number of awards, advance conditions and setback conditions that are associated with the plurality of locations is preferably weighted. That is, each award, each advance condition and each setback condition are associated with a probability of being associated with one of the plurality of locations.

In this embodiment, as illustrated in Fig. 8A, the player symbol 266 begins the game located at the start location. As described above, the start location and the destination location can be any of the plurality of locations. In this embodiment, the locations are arranged in the shape of a grid and the

player symbol will move in an S-shaped pattern from the bottom of the grid (i.e., the start location 202) to the top of the grid (i.e., the destination location 264). The gaming device also provides an award display or indicator 268 that displays the current award amount accumulated by or provided to the player.

5 As illustrated in Figs. 8A and 8B, upon the initiation of the game, in one embodiment, the gaming device moves the player symbol four locations toward the destination location to highlighted location 210. An award of twenty is revealed to be associated with the location of the player symbol. The revealed award is provided to the player. Accordingly, the award display
10 268 is updated to reflect this provided award amount. Appropriate messages such as "YOUR PLAYER SYMBOL LOCATION HAS A VALUE OF 20" are preferably provided to the player visually, or through suitable audio or audiovisual displays.

 In this embodiment, since the player symbol has not reached the
15 destination location, the gaming device moves the player symbol at least one location toward the destination location. As illustrated in Fig. 8C, the gaming device moves the player symbol six locations toward the destination location to highlighted location 222. Location 222 is revealed to be associated with an advance condition of advancing sixteen locations toward the destination
20 location. Appropriate messages such as "YOUR PLAYER SYMBOL LOCATION IS AN ADVANCE OF 16 SPOTS" are preferably provided to the player visually, or through suitable audio or audiovisual displays.

 As illustrated in Fig. 8D, the player symbol is accordingly moved sixteen locations to highlighted location 254 which is revealed to be
25 associated with an award of thirty. The revealed award is provided to the player and the award display 268 is updated to reflect the current total provided award amount. Appropriate messages such as "YOUR ADVANCED LOCATION HAS A VALUE OF 30" are preferably provided to the player visually, or through suitable audio or audiovisual displays.

30 Since the player symbol has not reached the destination location, the gaming device moves the player symbol at least one location toward the

destination location. As illustrated in Fig. 8E, the gaming device moves the player symbol four locations toward the destination location to highlighted location 262. Location 262 is revealed to be associated with a setback condition of moving the player symbol two locations away or further from the destination location. Appropriate messages such as "YOUR PLAYER SYMBOL LOCATION IS A BACKUP OF 2 SPOTS" are preferably provided to the player visually, or through suitable audio or audiovisual displays. It should be appreciated that at this point in the game, if the location 262 had not been associated with a setback condition, the player symbols next move would have moved the symbol to or beyond the destination location and thus ending the game. Therefore, in this embodiment, the setback condition aided the player by enabling the player symbol to make at least one more move and for the player to potentially obtain one more award. That is, unlike the embodiments described above wherein the setback conditions hinder the player symbol's progress toward the destination location and the advance conditions aid the player symbol's progress toward the destination location, in this embodiment, the setback conditions aid the player and the advance conditions hinder the player symbol's progress toward the destination location.

As illustrated in Fig. 8F, the player symbol is accordingly moved back to highlighted location 258 which is revealed to be associated with an award of fifty. In one embodiment, the closer the locations are to the destination location, the greater the risk that the next move will be to or beyond the destination location and thus the greater the award associated with the locations. The revealed award is provided to the player and the award display 268 is updated to reflect the current total provided award amount. Appropriate messages such as "YOUR BACKUP LOCATION HAS A VALUE OF 30" are preferably provided to the player visually, or through suitable audio or audiovisual displays.

Since the player symbol has not reached the destination location, the gaming device moves the player symbol at least one location toward the

destination location. As illustrated in Fig. 8G, the gaming device moves the player symbol three locations toward the destination location to the highlighted destination location 264. As the player symbol is now located at the destination location, the game ends and the player cannot be provided
5 any more awards. In one embodiment, the game ends if the symbol is moved beyond the destination location. In another embodiment, the game ends if the symbol is moved to or beyond the destination location. Appropriate messages such as "DESTINATION LOCATION" and "GAME OVER" are preferably provided to the player visually, or through suitable audio or
10 audiovisual displays.

In one embodiment, the player is not provided any award associated with each location the player symbol is moved to, but rather the player is provided an award based on the number or amount of locations the symbol is moved to before the game ends. In this embodiment, the greater the number
15 of locations the player symbol is moved to during the play of the game, the greater the award provided to the player at the end of the game. For example, if the player symbol is moved to four locations before player symbol reaches the destination location, the player is provided an award of ten credits. On the other hand, if the player symbol is moved to eight locations
20 before the player symbol reaches the destination location, the player is provided an award of fifty credits. In another embodiment, the player is provided an award for the amount of different locations the symbol is moved to before the game ends. In an alternative embodiment, the less locations the player's symbol moves to before reaching the destination location, the greater
25 the award that will be provided to the player. In this embodiment, the player's objective is to reach the destination location with as little moves as possible because the less moves it takes to reach the destination location, the greater the award. In another embodiment, the award provided to the player is based on a combination of the number of locations the player symbol moves to
30 before the player symbol reaches the destination location and the awards associated with any of the locations the player symbol is moved to.

In an alternative embodiment of the present invention (not shown), the player is not provided an award for the symbol reaching or moving beyond the destination location, but rather, the player is provided an award based on how many locations between two predetermined locations, such as the start location and the destination location, that the symbol is moved to before the symbol reaches or is moved beyond one of the two predetermined locations. In this embodiment, unlike the embodiments described above, if the symbol is relocated or moved back to or back beyond the start location (i.e., by a setback condition), the game ends. In one embodiment, the player is provided any award associated with each location the player symbol is moved to. In another embodiment, the award provided to the player is based on the number of locations the player symbol is moved to before the player symbol is moved to a location that is not between the two predetermined locations. In an alternative embodiment, the less locations the player's symbol moves to before reaching a location that is not between the two predetermined locations, the greater the award that will be provided to the player. In another embodiment, the award provided to the player is based on a combination of the number of locations the player symbol moves to before the player symbol is moved to a location that is not between the two predetermined locations and any award provided for any of the locations the player symbol is moved to.

In this embodiment, depending on the current location of the symbol, both the setback conditions and the advance conditions can each hinder or aid the player. For example, if the symbol is close to the start location, then a setback condition hinders the player because the setback condition may relocate the symbol back beyond the start location thus ending the game. On the other hand, if the symbol is close to the destination location, then a setback condition aids the player because without relocating the symbol further away from the destination location, the symbol may be moved to or beyond the destination location, thus ending the game.

The bonus scheme of the present invention involves a player who is pursuing a destination location. In pursuit of this location, the player may encounter setback conditions and advance conditions. Depending upon where the player moves a symbol, a setback condition may or may not occur.

5 Furthermore, as the player advances from location to location, the gaming device preferably provides the player with the option of accepting a particular bonus value and ending the bonus round, or continuing the bonus round with the risk of ultimately receiving a lower bonus value. In addition, if the player reaches the destination location, the gaming device preferably awards the
10 player with a relatively high bonus value.

While the present invention has been described in connection with what is presently considered to be the most practical and preferred embodiments, it is to be understood that the invention is not limited to the disclosed embodiments, but on the contrary is intended to cover various
15 modifications and equivalent arrangements included within the spirit and scope of the claims. It is thus to be understood that modifications and variations in the present invention may be made without departing from the novel aspects of this invention as defined in the claims, and that this application is to be limited only by the scope of the claims.